



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: February 9, 2009
Release Number: 09-07

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SBA's Patriot Express Loans Top \$250 Million to Vets and Military Community Entrepreneurs

WASHINGTON – In just 20 months, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Patriot Express Pilot Loan Initiative has approved more than \$250 million in loan guarantees to nearly 2,900 veterans and their spouses who are using the SBA-guaranteed funds to establish and expand their small businesses.

More than 20 percent of the loans have come in the first four months of fiscal year 2009, and overall loan amounts have averaged around \$88,000 per loan. Some 15 percent of the loans have gone to military spouses.

Patriot Express, launched June 28, 2007, builds on the more than \$1 billion in loans SBA guarantees annually for veteran-owned businesses, and the counseling assistance and procurement support it provides each year to more than 100,000 veterans, service-disabled veterans and Reserve members. More than 14 percent of businesses in America are owned by veterans.

"Despite the difficulties presented by today's economy, SBA is committed to helping America's service men and women who are fighting the War on Terror, and all vets and military spouses," SBA Acting Administrator Darryl Hairston said. "We believe that Patriot Express, supported by SBA's other services, goes directly to the needs of these American patriots who wish to start businesses, and in the process encourages job creation and growth, an essential part of the President's economic agenda."

Patriot Express is a streamlined loan product based on the agency's highly successful SBA Express Program, but with enhanced guaranty and interest rate characteristics. The Patriot Express loan is offered by SBA's network of participating lenders nationwide and features SBA's fastest turnaround time for loan approvals. Loans are available up to \$500,000 and qualify for SBA's maximum guaranty of up to 85 percent for loans of \$150,000 or less and up to 75 percent for loans over \$150,000 up to \$500,000. For loans above \$350,000, lenders are required to take all available collateral.

The Patriot Express loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases. Patriot Express loans feature SBA's lowest interest rates for business loans, generally 2.25 percent to 4.75 percent over prime depending upon the size and maturity of the loan. Local SBA district offices will have a listing of Patriot Express lenders in their areas. Details on the initiative can be found at www.sba.gov/patriotexpress.

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Interest rate maximums for Patriot Express loans are the same as those for regular 7(a) loans: a maximum of Prime + 2.25 percent for maturities under seven years; Prime + 2.75 percent for seven years or more. Interest rates can be higher by two percent for loans of \$25,000 or less; and one percent for loans between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

Patriot Express is available to military community members including veterans, service-disabled veterans, active-duty service members participating in the military's Transition Assistance Program, Reservists and National Guard members, current spouses of any of the above, and the widowed spouse of a service member or veteran who died during service, or of a service-connected disability.

Patriot Express loans have been approved in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Guam and generally range from \$5,000 to \$375,000 in individual loan amounts. After loan applications are approved by the bank, they are submitted to SBA for approval. Most applications are approved by SBA within 24 hours.

SBA has veterans' business development officers in district offices in every state and territory able to provide military community members full access to the SBA's range of programs and services. There are also five Veterans Business Outreach Centers located in: Albany, N.Y.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Lynn Haven, Fla.; Edinburg, Texas; and Sacramento, Calif.

In addition to district offices, SBA's resource partners SCORE, Counselors to America's Small Business, Small Business Development Centers, and Women's Business Centers provide local and online assistance with: writing a business plan, financing options to start or grow your business, managing the business, expanding the business and selling goods and services to the government.

For those who are already small business owners and who expect call-up, the SBA and its resource partners have expertise to assist with preparing their businesses before deployment, managing their businesses, selling goods and services to the government, obtaining other SBA financing and financial assistance, and obtaining loans for economic injury – Military Reserve Economic Injury Disaster Loans (MREIDL) – loans of up to \$2 million are available for small businesses sustaining economic injury because an owner or essential employee has been called to active duty as a military reservist.

The SBA and its Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) provides comprehensive assistance, outreach and support to veterans. Each year the SBA assists more than 100,000 veterans, service-disabled veterans and Reserve Component members. Go to www.sba.gov/vets.

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Editor please note: A Web-based press kit on the Patriot Express Initiative can be found at . . .

http://www.sba.gov/patriotexpress/SBA_PATRIOT_PRESS_KIT.html.